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ABSTRACT

This study used a social constructivist framework to examine how one at-risk fifth-grader constructed her literacy through social interaction in her nonschool, prior school, and present school experiences. Through open-ended interviews and classroom observations, experiences that fostered and hindered the child's literacy development were identified and examined. Nonschool factors such as limited experiences in being read to, a limited range of interests, lack of school-home collaboration, and limited experience with fiction, nonfiction, and reference print hindered her literacy development. Ineffective teaching methods and limited experience with fiction, nonfiction, and reference print at her prior school also hindered the child's literacy development. Her present school and nonschool experiences are more conducive to literary development. Six appendixes list the categories and subcategories of nonschool, prior school, and present school factors that constrain and foster literacy development. (Contains 36 references.) (MDM)

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ED 371 603

Factors That Constrain and Foster The Social Construction Of Literacy: A Case Study

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Running Head: FACTORS THAT CONSTRAIN AND FOSTER LITERACY

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Abstract

Within a social constructivist theoretical framework, the case of Tami demonstrates how one fifth-grade Chapter 1 student constructed her literacy through social interaction in her nonschool, prior school, and present school experiences. During open-ended interviews, Tami shared her memories, feelings, and thoughts about fiction, nonfiction, and reference print. Observations of Tami in her regular classroom, in her Chapter 1 classroom, and through think-aloud interviews, the investigator identified both constraining and fostering factors in Tami's literacy development. This case demonstrates the importance of viewing literacy holistically through not only the present school culture but the non-school and prior school cultures as well.

Factors That Constrain and Foster The Social Construction Of Literacy: A Case Study

America will have 4.5 million more minority children by the year 2000 than it has now (Center of Demographic Policy Institute for Educational Leadership, 1990). Increased numbers of minority and poor elementary students are in "at-risk situations" that limit students' potential. It is important to closely examine this population of students in our public schools (The National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project Team at Stanford, 1992). Investigations are needed to determine how the nonschool and school factors constrain and foster the social construction of literacy development of this population of students.

Students enter formal schooling already possessing a literacy history. That history may consist of a multitude of literacy rich experiences or a dearth of any literacy experiences that match school expectations. The history of Chapter 1 reading students is in the latter group because they tend to enter formal schooling with a history of limited literacy experiences. However, many studies have stated that Chapter 1 programs have historically not effectively provided appropriate help to those identified students (McPartland & Slavin, 1990; Rowan & Guthrie, 1988; Ascher & Flaxman, 1988; Slavin & Madden, 1987; Ascher, 1987; Culver, 1984; Mullin & Summers, 1980). Consequently, it is important to determine whether nonschool factors and/or school factors constrain these Chapter 1 students' literacy experiences.

Studies that examine the nonschool and school factors that constrain and foster the construction of literacy may help educators develop a better understanding of how these factors influence literacy development. Such studies could also aid teachers in designing curriculum and implementing instructional strategies that overcome the constraining aspects and build on the positive aspects of students' social construction of literacy.

Related Literature

Numerous studies have been conducted that give some insight into the nonschool and school factors that foster literacy development among students in at-risk situations. These studies suggest the learning process occurs within a social culture and that the adult role is important to the social and cognitive development of the student (Anang, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978).

Nonschool culture

Initially, parents within the home culture provided children with literacy experiences. The child used speech to construct and transform knowledge for application of literacy activities (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, studies suggested that significant cognitive growth was more likely found among infants and young children who frequently interacted with their parents (Hunter, McCarthy, MacTurk, and Vietze,1987; Wood, Bruner, and Ross,1976) Additional studies found that parents who read and valued reading and writing prepared their children to become literate (Anang, 1982; Smith cited in Giddings,1992).

School Culture

Reading

Next, teachers in the school culture provided children with literacy experiences. Cultural differences that exist in language patterns created either matches or mismatches between the home and school cultures. The use of scaffolding, interactional support provided by adults and more able peers , and of weaving, diverse and rich literacy experiences which incorporate students' intentions into the literacy process, allowed for these cultural and developmental differences among students (Dyson,1990). In addition, with the experience-text relationship method (ETR), teachers used and elicited questioning to help children draw relationships between their background knowledge and text information. They also allowed culturally similar discourse to occur during text discussions (Au and Kawakami,1984).

Another aspect of literacy, experiences with different genres among young children, has recently been questioned. Generally, informational text instruction is delayed until intermediate grades in elementary school. In a recent study, Pappas (1993) found that young children were able to use a range of strategies while pretending to read both fiction and nonfiction text.

Additionally, within the school culture, emphasis on reading comprehension fostered students' social construction of literacy (Pearson, 1990). The text, students' prior knowledge, students' strategies, the task, and the classroom situation were all facets that influenced comprehension. Using literature-based reading instruction produced more proficient readers than those using basal-reading instruction (Giddings, 1992; Gersten & Dimino, 1989). Use of semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis,

metacognitive awareness strategies, and reciprocal teaching further enhanced students' comprehension (Pearson, 1985; 1990).

Writing

Opportunites for discourse, an important aspect of the social construction of literacy, were fostered through the use of author's chair, public sharing of books, peer conferencing, collaborative writing, and dialogue journals (Englert & Palinscar, 1991). Discourse as pre-writing activites were examined in two case studies which analyzed discourse between a student and teacher. Maria, a college remedial writing student, conformed to the teacher's expectation in her assignment (Hull, Rose, Fraser, and Castellano, 1991). Ella, a fifth-grade African-American student, conformed to the teacher's expectation after individual conferencing in her assignment (McCarthey, 1992).

Reading and Writing

By using conferences, integrated reading and writing activities were accomplished through the use of themes in the North Warren Project for third and fourth grades (Walmsley & Walp, 1990). Class structure and cultural differences accounted for variations in language practices and in ways children learned to read and write in different settings. Directed instruction and materials and problems which engaged students with each other around specific tasks were effective for culturally different students (McCarthey & Raphael, 1989). Further, students who experienced text analysis of actual writing passages, teacher modeling of the writing process, guided writing, and independent writing showed progress in reading and writing (Raphael & Englert, 1990). Multiple stategies to create a dynamic classroom environment were cojointly used. Dialogue used as pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge; teacher-student

interaction in which the teacher accepted culturally different rules; peer collaboration; informal writing; interactive work; dialogue journals; and peer conferencing all promoted literacy (Cazden, 1982). Also, how readers treated writers affected writer's development (Nystrand, 1990).

In the above studies, some aspect of literacy development within a social constructivist framework was examined. However, further investigation is still needed to examine a more comprehensive view of nonschool and school factors that constrain and foster literacy development.

Theoretical Framework

To examine the influence of factors that constrain and foster literacy development, this study used the theoretical framework of social constructivism based on the perspectives of Vygotsky who described human learning as "occuring first on an interpsychological plane, or between people; then on an intrapsychological plane, within the individual" (McCarthey & Raphael; 1989:23).

In addition, Goodson (1990:307) states that data are needed on the "constraints beyond the event, the school, the classroom and the participant." He argues for the context of these data to be gathered from a social constructivist theoretical framework.

Using the following three assumptions of social constructivist theory McCarthy and Raphael (1989:21) frame the literacy experience: "(a)knowledge is constructed by the interaction of the individual within the social-cultural environment, (b) higher mental functions including reading and writing are social and cultural in nature, and (c) knowledgeable members of the culture can assist others in learning."

This study assumed that the literacy experience of this elementary fifth grade Chapter 1 student was socially constructed and was grounded in this theoretical framework.

The limitation of this study included lack of access to observations in Tami's prior school and nonschool experiences. Her memories and school records provided the data for that aspect of the study.

Needed in this study, then, were methods that provided a developmental view of an elementary fifth grade Chapter 1 student's experiences with print through nonschool, prior school, and present school cultures. Open-ended interviews (Yin, 1989) about memories, feelings, and attitudes about fiction, nonfiction, and reference materials were used to gather that data. Audiotaped observations of her regular classroom reading experiences (Yin, 1989) and videotaped observations of her Chapter 1 classroom reading experiences (Yin, 1989) were used to gather data about her present schooling experiences. Further, think-aloud interviews about the Chapter 1 videotapes (Powell, 1992) were used to allow the participant to verbally recount learning experiences from her perspective in a social context when the researcher was a participant observer as described by Babchuk (1961).

Purpose

The present investigation examined the nonschool and school factors that constrain and foster the social construction of literacy development of an elementary fifth grade Chapter 1 student. In designing the study, an attempt was made to (1) determine what nonschool factors influence a fifth grade Chapter 1 student's interaction with print, (2) determine what prior school factors constrain and foster a fifth grade Chapter 1 student's interaction with print, and (3) determine what present school factors

constrain and foster a fifth grade Chapter 1 student's interaction with print.

Research Context and Participant

In a low-income urban neighborhood in the desert southwest, this school used an Accelerated Schools process that was designed for students in at-risk situations (The National Center For the Accelerated Schools Project Team At Stanford, 1992). This school also used multi-age grouping which consisted of placing children in either primary or intermediate configurations.

Chapter 1 students qualified for additional reading services based on reading scores in stanines one, two, or three from the previous school year of the district criterion-reference test. The school qualified for Chapter 1 services based on the number of parents in the school who received welfare. However, qualifying Chapter 1 students did not have to be the children of these parents.

Prior to this study, I conducted a pilot study with fifteen fifth grade Chapter 1 students . In the pilot study I determined how these students functioned with fiction, nonfiction, environmental, and reference print. I also determined the frequency of these items in their home environments. From this pilot study I purposely selected one student for a case study to further determine the nonschool and school factors that constrain and foster the social construction of her literacy development.

The participant in the study, Tami, was a white fifth grade elementary Chapter 1 student in this school. The participant's classroom was grouped in a multi-age intermediate configuration of third, fourth, and fifth grade students. A multi-age group from her class attended the

Chapter 1 class with multi-age groups from two other intermediate classrooms.

Data Collection

Tami's prior and present experiences of her literacy development were socially constructed through nonschool and school cultures. Multiple sources of data were needed to increase the credibility of reporting this study (Guba and Lincoln,1982). Open-ended interviews (Yin, 1989), audiotaped observations of regular classroom reading experiences (Yin, 1989), videotaped observations of Chapter 1 classroom reading experiences (Yin, 1989), and think-aloud interviews about the Chapter 1 videotapes (Powell, 1992) were used. The think-aloud interviews were intended to provide the investigator a view of the classroom experience from the participant's experience. Artifacts, formal records, and informal conversations with the Reading Improvement teacher and the regular classroom teacher were also used to verify or confirm data gathered from the participant.

Three open-ended audiotaped interviews (Yin, 1989) were conducted over a three week period with Tami about memories, feelings, and attitudes about fiction, nonfiction, and reference materials. For each interview the participant was asked to think back as far as she could remember in her home, with her prior school, and with her present school about fiction, nonfiction, and reference print experiences.

Using the case study format suggested by Yin(1989) three observations a week for four weeks were done in the regular classroom. Three videotaped observations a week for four weeks were done in the Chapter 1 classroom. Additionally, think-aloud interviews were conducted with the participant following the videotaped observations.

For two weeks, I observed in the participant's regular classroom, taking brief notes. Nine audiotaped observations were conducted over the next three weeks. A total of five weeks of classroom observation was conducted. For a four week period, ten videotaped observations were conducted. Following each videotape, an audiotaped think-aloud interview was conducted with the participant.

Using the constant comparative method of data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1987) transcripts of all tape recordings of open-ended interviews, observations, and think-aloud interviews were analyzed. Categories were generated through the nature of the interviews. Existing categories were compared and modified to fit the developmental nature of the study. The transcripts were then reviewed with Tami.

Using the criteria suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1982), the goodness of the study was determined by (1) dependability which was accomplished by gathering data over a period of six weeks; (2) confirmability, which was determined through the use of triangulation and supported analysis by original data; (3) transferability, which contains rich descriptions with many quotes from the respondent; and (4) credibility which included triangulated data, persistent observation, artifacts and formal records, peer debriefing, and a member check of work.

Results

From the data analysis I generated three main themes of literacy development (See Tables 1 and 2). The first section refers to nonschool factors that constrain and foster literacy. The second section refers to prior school factors that constrain and foster literacy. The third section refers to present school factors that constrain and foster literacy.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 here.

Tami's story

As I observed her, I discovered that Tami was a quiet, fifth grade student. She was always very attentive and extremely cooperative. Tami was very sensitive to the feelings of others and often chose the role of listener.

Tami lived in a small rental house in a low-income urban neighborhood with her mother, her mother's boyfriend, three sisters, a brother, and an uncle. She shared a bedroom with her three sisters in the small three-bedroom house. Her mother babysat nine children in their home and her mother's boyfriend worked for the local newspaper in the print shop.

Tami had few opportunities to engage in literacy activities at home. She envisioned getting an adequate enough education to be able to read the labels at the grocery store to buy what her husband wanted. She read to her two-year-old sister for about thirty minutes four nights a week as assigned homework. Her central reading interest focused on stories about animals and her peer group.

Nonschool Factors That Constrain Literacy (see Appendix A)

Fiction Print

From the data, I interpreted that many factors in Tami's nonschool culture constrained her fiction print literacy.

Read-to-experience

As a young child Tami received an occasional story at naptime or when she was ill. Her favorite story was The Velveteen Rabbit.

. . . she would read it to me so I would go to sleep or take a nap. . . She would read it to me sometimes when I was sick . . .

Environmental Limitations

The home literacy environment contained a low quality of print that generally came from the local grocery store. Additionally, she rarely took a library book home from the school because her mom babysat nine children.

...we have books from the library we get...

Do ya'll take those home or do you leave them at school?

We take them home, but some of us don't because we don't want to lose them at home or something.

What are you doing?

Sometimes I take mine home, but I'm starting to leave them at school because I don't want them to get torn because my mom watches nine kids sometimes.

So, you really worry about that, huh?

Yeah, especially the two little ones get into the crayons,so you know what a mess that is.

In addition, Tami's literacy experiences were not nurtured through available community resources, such as the public library. In fact, she had been to the public library only once, which was to get a book to complete a class assignment.

Home-school Connections

Viewing school and home as interacting collaboratively was an important factor to Tami. Yet, Tami remembered only one experience in which she was asked to bring a book to school from home. She borrowed a book, The Giving Tree, to share with her kindergarten class.

Attitudes and Feelings

Her feelings about herself as a reader further constrained her literacy development. When she read she became "bored because the words were really hard." Thus, she chose another activity.

Interests

Tami did not have adequate opportunities to develop a broad reading interest. Instead, her literacy interest was constrained by focusing only on stories about animals and her peer group.

Nonfiction Print

Read-to-experience

Tami again had limited experiences of being read nonfiction print as a young child. When her mother read to her, it was on a limited subject, animals. Then, when she was older, she needed help with content reading to complete her assignments.

Attitudes and Feelings

Because Tami had little prior knowledge upon which to build her experiences she had difficulty understanding how to get information from print. She preferred the more familiar fiction print and stated, "I think fiction books are a little funner."

Reference Print

Use of materials

Tami's home contained some dated encyclopedias, a dictionary, and a thesaurus inherited by her mom's boyfriend. The children learned that these were "look-but-don't-touch" items, occasionally using them for homework assignments.

Limited Materials

I found that the lack of other literacy items in her home constrained her experience with a rich literacy environment.

You don't have those at home, anything like that at home, magazines or anything like that?

Sometimes we have newspapers because my mom's boyfriend works at the Review Journal. He gets a free newspaper.

Does he bring one home every day?

Huh-huh. Sometimes he would bring newspapers for us if it was recycling day. He would bring old newspapers that weren't going to be used or recycled and give it to us. We would look at the comics sometimes and we would read the front cover.

Me and my sister would read it together and find out what was going on.

Overall

Learning Style

Tami believed she had difficulty processing information of all print when she read silently. She stated that she needed to both say and hear words to aid her comprehension.

Personality

Additionally, I observed that Tami was not an assertive student who demanded attention; instead she was the student who always obeyed and followed the rules. Many times she passively observed the interactions of other students. Inwardly, she had the interest; outwardly she placed constraints on herself to interact in valuable literacy dialogue.

Nonschool Factors that Foster Literacy (see Appendix B)

I found that even though there are many nonschool factors that constrain Tami's literacy development, there are factors that foster it as well.

Fiction Print

Read-to-experience

Even though Tami had infrequent experiences of being read to, her mother modeled the role as a reader and served as the more knowledgeable person in the interaction.

Reading-to-experience

Tami, in return, provided the reading model to her younger sister by reading to her as the more knowledgeable person in the interaction.

> Well, I have a smaller sister. She's two. My mom gets her some fiction books and our teacher tells us to read for twenty minutes or forty minutes. I read books to her for that twenty minutes or forty.
>
> ...So, you read to her pretty much every day?
>
> When she hears the book she goes back and says the same word on the same pages, but she really doesn't know what she's reading sometimes. She just pretends like she knows what she's reading.

Attitudes and feelings

I discovered that through her literacy experiences Tami acquired positive attitudes and feelings toward fiction books. She said fiction books were "more adventury and funner, too." When asked to tell about her feelings about fiction books, she responded:

> Kind of tell me about your feelings about fiction books. You know, how do you feel about them?
>
> Sometimes, I feel sad.
>
> Why?
>
> Maybe there's a story of someone dying like in-
>
> Sadako?
>
> Yeah, and like in The Golden Retriever.... Fiction materials are kind of- I really like them because they've got things you don't know about and they make the stories a different thing from in real life and you know something different that's not true, but it's a book...
>
> So, you're telling me that you really do like reading fiction materials?
>
> Yeah.

Interests

I discovered that even though her limited reading interests constrained her from exploring other topics of fiction print, her pronounced interest in reading about animals and her peer group motivated her to continue reading.

Nonfiction Print

Read-to-experience

When Tami encountered difficulty with her homework, her older sister served as the more knowledgeable person and modeled how to read nonfiction print.

> Last year when I was in fourth, my sister, she would read some nonfiction books to me. I can't remember what the names were. She would like read like nonfiction books to me like once a week or something because I had to study about nonfiction books.

Reference Print

Home experiences

Interestingly, I found that Tami's mother provided a model in her role expectation of herself. On an interest survey, Tami stated that knowing how to read would help her in the future because " if you go the the store and your husband tells what to get, you will not know what the label says."

The literacy experiences she gained in her home nurtured this role expectation. It also provided an enjoyable, purposeful reading experience with her mother.

> Me and my mom would make cookies sometimes and on the back of the chocolate chips bag we would follow the directions. My mom would add some things to make it better. Then she would read how many eggs and stuff and we'd make our cookies like that. Some, mostly these little cards with recipes on them...[sic]

Prior School Factors That Constrain Literacy (see Appendix C)

Fiction Print

Read-to-experience

Tami's nonschool culture provided few experiences in being read to; her prior school culture indicated the same pattern. Only two of her teachers from kindergarten through fourth grade read to the class on a regular basis.

Environmental limitations

Teaching reading through the use of basals created limitations for students. Controlled vocabulary and sentence structure limited the student's experience with quality literature. Further, incomplete literary selections constrained the richness of the student's literacy experience. Tami's experience with basal instruction followed a familiar routine in first, second, and third grade.

> In first grade, my teacher had basals and reading groups and she would take us over to a table and we would read with her. When we were done we would read certain stories in the book and then we would sometimes-uh. She would give us words and we ,would look them up in the glossary or in the dictionary and write them down.
>
> Now, when you used a dictionary, that was in second grade?
>
> Uh-huh.
>
> And they were like vocabulary words?
>
> Or glossary or whatever.
>
> Oh, sometimes you used the dictionary and sometimes you used the glossary in the back of the book?
>
> Yeah.

In third grade our teacher, he would- We would have the same books in the reading group and I was in the second grade one. There would be fiction stories and we'd sometimes read during the day, fiction books and nonfiction books.

During Tami's fourth grade year her reading experience further constrained her literacy development through the lack of any direct instruction or guidance in using the text.

In fourth grade how did you do reading? Did you use basal books or did you use literature books or trade books? Like these, chapter books... do you remember what you did?

My teacher would sit down and read to us from chapter books every time after lunch. That was like our reading.

That was your reading?

Kind of... and sometimes we would read to ourselves.

When you were reading to yourselves, what did you use, chapter books?

Yes, mostly chapter books.

Nonfiction Print

Classroom experiences

I discovered that limited classroom experiences with nonfiction print constrained Tami's success and interest in using that genre. Tami recalled one incident that she identified as a nonfiction book the class read.

I really haven't had a lot of reading with nonfiction books...

...And then you can't really remember like in the first, or kindergarten, or second any books that were really non-fiction books?

No.

And so, then in third grade you don't remember any either.

No, except the ghost story. It was like one story about a ghost. The story is called The House. They have a movie of it, too. And I haven't really read many nonfiction books.

Reference Print

Use of materials

In second, third, and fourth grade, Tami recalled using dictionaries specifically for vocabulary study as part of her reading instruction. She does remember her second grade classroom having encyclopedias but doesn't remember ever using them. Not until fourth grade did Tami do any kind of reading assignment that required her to use reference print.

Support Programs

Teachers in pullout support programs often used different materials from the classroom, used rote drill exercises, sorely lacking in developing higher-level thinking, critical reading skills, or writing proficiency (Rowan & Guthrie, 1988). Therefore, the support program further constrained the literacy development of the student. She described her prior experiences in Chapter 1 programs.

Tell me about your Chapter program in first grade.

We kind of did the same thing as we did in school. We would learn spelling.

You mean spelling like your classroom teacher was doing or would it be something different?

Different words.

Do you feel the classroom teacher was doing the same thing?

No, she would have one of us take our writing words so we can have practice cause she wanted us to get a good grade on our spelling.. and we did.

That's what you did mostly in Chapter... in first grade, you worked on spelling?

Yeah, mostly, sometimes we did games, too.

What about in third grade?

We did all kinds of papers.

Like work sheets and ditto papers?

Yeah, and we would work on those.

Do you know what they would be on?

They'd be on , uh, sometimes like three little pictures of animals and then you had to match the beginning of the word that went with that animal and spell the rest of the word, cause the word wasn't fully spelled.

Prior School Factors That Foster Literacy (see Appendix D)

Fiction

Read-to-experience

As Tami discussed her prior school experiences she recalled that her kindergarten and fourth grade teachers read to her class on a regular basis. Children provided with an articulate expressive reading model gain valuable literacy experience.

Writing workshop

I found that Tami had some valuable experiences using reading and writing together. In second and fourth grade her teachers provided time for writing workshop. During that time Tami experienced valuable interaction with teacher and peers during the writing process. In addition, Tami made the reading-writing connection as students were encouraged to read their writing to other students and to the class.

> ...in fourth grade... we would also write stories; we would have writing workshop. We would have a workshop. We would write stories, nonfiction stories sometimes and fiction stories. We would make up these stories and then we would do all the editing and stuff. We would have these papers. First, we would read to people and we had to put the person's name and our name. We read the story to somebody and they would write if I did good or I needed more practice.

Additionally, in fourth grade Tami wrote daily about assigned topics in a journal. Even though she was not allowed to select topics that would have created more ownership of her writing, this provided her the opportunity to communicate in writing about her thoughts and feelings with her teacher.

Nonfiction Print

Classroom experiences

I discovered that another experience that fostered Tami's literacy development was an assignment that required her to use nonfiction print.

> . . .in the fourth we had to do reports on the presidents. I got Ronald Reagan and we had to get as much information. . .

Reference Print

Classroom experience

During our discussions, Tami told about a reference book that she and other students found very helpful.

> What's that called?
> It's called How to Spell.
> It's a book? A spelling helper?
> Uh-huh.... We used it for writing
> workshop and stuff.

Another year, her third grade teacher used a menu from which children read and selected items to purchase using fake money they had earned in the classroom. She found this activity to be highly motivational and accepted the challenge of earning the most money each week.

Present School Factors That Constrain Literacy (see Appendix E)

Nonfiction print

While the prior nonschool and school experiences constrained Tami's nonfiction literacy development, her present school experiences were rich and diverse. No constraints were found, providing Tami an opportunity to gain experience with nonfiction print.

Reference print

Student planning

When the students were making a papier-mache model of a volcano for the class, the experience could have been richer if the teachers had involved students more in the planning stage of making the model.

At this point, are you sure what your experiment is going to be when you get finished and you do it for the whole class?

No

You're not clear yet? Did you read any directions before you started?

No, Mrs. T. just told us what to do and then we started putting the stuff on for the volcano.

Learning style

Tami felt that she could not comprehend what she was reading unless she read it aloud; however, she felt constrained to read out loud because other kids made fun of the way she arduously read the text.

. . . I really don't like the way people make fun of the way you read. . . Well, sometimes when I read alone I don't get what I'm reading, but when I read aloud I know what I'm saying.

Personality

I observed that Tami's sensitivity made her self-conscious about reading which enhanced her feelings that she couldn't read well. She tried to be more careful about pronouncing words correctly which slowed down her reading even more and prevented her from attending to the meaning of what she was reading. Also, on a recent reading test, she, in fact, performed adequately on the silent reading comprehension portion of the test. Based on her comments and my observations, she is not aware that this is an effective reading strategy for her.

Present School Factors That Foster Literacy (see Appendix F)

Fiction

Cultivates reading attitudes

Multiple factors foster literacy, some incidental and some explicit. However, her total culture contributes to Tami's literacy. One incidental factor occured because her classroom teacher provided her the opportunity to order inexpensive, yet quality books.

Ok, do you ever order books from the book clubs at school, like Troll?

Book orders?

Yeah.

The teacher emphasized to her students the importance of reading on a daily basis. She encouraged this practice by making it a part of Tami's homework assignment and by providing time in the classroom for her to read silently and then with a partner.

...our teacher tells us to read for twenty minutes or forty minutes. I read books to her (her smaller sister) for that twenty minutes or forty.

...we come in from lunch and we have DEAR silent time until third bell and then we get to read with a partner. Most of the time we read fiction.

Provides for reading strategies

Tami was given an opportunity to reread her text by performing with her Chapter 1 classmates during a reader's theater.

When ya'll were studying Indians, what fiction books did you read?

The Peanut Butter Pilgrims

Yeah, it was cute. and ya'll did the reader's theater on that.

Yeah.

During reading discussions the teacher provided Tami many opportunities to use prior knowledge to relate to her present reading material. When discussing a recent earthquake the teacher told of her swimming pool making big waves. Tami related, "I do that in the bathtub." When discussing a character's feelings about his family being killed in a tidal wave, the students discussed their feelings about losses. Tami responded, "When my two cats died I felt sad. I was crying a lot. I didn't eat for two days."

Further, during reading discussion, the teacher provided many opportunities for the students to give their opinions about the text and to support their answers by using information from the text. Tami replied, "He got frightened," when the teacher asked what a character did when he dived in the water. Another time she responded, "The father said you don't eat fish without rice," when the teacher asked why the people in the village neeeded fishermen and farmers. When asked to reply to what the character's father said, Tami said,

I had always wanted another son.

And so, what are they going to do?

Have Jiya live with them.

The teacher had students use prediction strategies prior to reading text. When discussing the cover of the text, the teacher asked what they thought the book would be about. Tami responded, "There are big waves." When asked, "What do you think happens to the ocean during an earthquake?" Tami responded, "It keeps going and covers land."

During a thematic study, activities were planned to help the students build background information about the subject. To help Tami's class understand the effects of a volcano, the team of teachers planned for the Chapter 1 and Reading Improvement Program (RIP) students to first build a volcano model and then to use chemicals to simulate an eruption.

During discussions of the text, the teacher incorporated questions about the vocabulary. The discussions were in relation to the words in context, which helped Tami better understand the use of the words.

Read the next sentence.

The giant wave spread out in an _____.

Arc

Swell.

Can you prove your answer?

I found it. (Reads sentence.)

Arc sounds better.

Many times during discussions Tami mentioned something she had previously heard in a teacher discussion. She used her listening habits during teacher instruction to her benefit and added to the discussion herself. Tami stated, "Another word for tidal wave is Tsunami."

Peer Tutor

Many times the teacher structured reading time for more proficient readers to read with less proficient ones. Also, the teacher used flexible grouping in class according to the activity. Tami worked in small groups or with a partner. Serving as both the tutor and tutee, she worked with other students to finish an assignment or on a more comprehensive project.

During text discussions, the teacher used opportunities to expand the students' knowledge about text. During the following discussion Tami interacted with the RIP teacher.

When was it (the book) written?

1938

Where does it say that?

That's when she won the Nobel Prize. Turn to the title page of the book.

1947

Turn to the back of the title page. It says The Big Wave and copyright. What does it say?

1947

Reading-writing behaviors

Many activities foster the literacy of Tami's reading-writing behaviors. The classroom teacher, the RIP teacher, and the Chapter 1 teacher planned activities to alllow the students to experience the relationship between reading and writing. By using pre-reading and pre-writing activities related around one subject, students collaborated with peers, worked in writing workshop and learned to take pride in their work.

Comprehension

Through discussion Tami worked on comprehension of reading text and other's writing. These activities also focused on story structure both in reading and writing. Further, these activities enhanced critical thinking.

Is this book real?

Huh-huh.

Look at the back of the book. What do you think?

I don't think it is.

Do you think this could happen, So.?

I think this story is real.

Why do you think it could be a real story?

I don't know.

Could everything that's happened so far really happen?

Yes.

Does that necessarily mean it did happen?

No.

Now, we know Sadako was real.

I think something like this could happen because of the tidal wave.

There is something similar to it.

Okay, so if it's not a real story, the author might have based it on some real history.

Nonfiction Print

Reading-writing purposes

Tami participated in projects that involved modeling and guided experience with a teacher. She prepared for writing by extensive reading and discussion of materials as a pre-writing activity. In one instance, she was going to write a paper to present an oral report to their class while also integrating content reading with the reading text. Tami described the activity.

Right now we're talking about a mountain erupting and each person is taking a turn reading the story.

Just keep talking about it.

Ok, and we're reading the first page about a guy, David

Johnston. He was a volcano expert and--- we're talking about what we think, some ideas and stuff and some things. We're talking about after we read what we think is going to happen next--- and oh, David Johnston, he was like a real expert at volcanoes although he was five miles away he died from the ash from the volcano...

Tami's nonfiction literacy was addditionally fostered by using thematic studies around which to build curriculum. There were also daily opportunities to recreationally read. In addition, she was given frequent opportunities to collaborate with peers in reading and writing reports using nonfiction print.

Rich literacy environment

The classroom teacher provided a rich literacy environment by providing a diversity of reading materials which included newspapers, magazines, and nonfiction articles. Tami stated:

Magazines we probably used just for reading and stuff. We would look at the pictures like Ranger Rick.

But you didn't use the information to do a report?

Huh-huh.

You used it more for just reading that you would enjoy. Who takes Ranger Rick?

Mrs. M. She has all kinds of magazines in our class.

Provides for reading strategies

As Tami read nonfiction text, she was guided in developing strategies to better read and comprehend this genre of text. She and other students were regularly asked to used the text to support their responses,

to make predictions about the text, and to use the organization of nonfiction text to find information.

That might be in another book, too, Dez. Look and see if you can find out anything. It may have it in the index.

Ah!

... Tami: (looking in index)

A-s, a-s-h-e-s.

Ashes.

Comprehension

As Tami entered discussions of nonfiction text, her comprehension was developed by teachers encouraging her to think critically about the text.

Go back to this one when it is talking about the logger and the people who were camping. To me, I still can't understand that. If they had been telling people that this volcano was going to erupt---

Why, did they have a warning?

They did have a warning, that's what I'm saying. Would you go camping by a volcano that's fixing to erupt?

I'm not sure about that.

Do you think you would do that?

No, I don't think I would.

Reference Print

Purposeful experiences

As Tami and her partner worked on their research report for their oral presentations, they began to identify information that would be helpful to the class and to explore ways to present that information.

Me and Dez and some other kids are going to do something about the plates.

I've been talking to Mrs. T. about that. We're trying to figure out a way to make a model that will show the movement of the plates. Have you got any ideas how we can build that?

We can put--- We can get a map and try to make pieces that look like it.

Varied writing purposes

In two of Tami's literacy settings, the students were involved with varied writing activities. In her regular classroom, Tami usally participated in writing workshop, using How To Spell as a resource. Additionally, in her Chapter 1 classroom, with a partner Tami used magazines, nonfiction books and encyclopedias to gather information to write a research report.

Reading/writing behaviors

Tami was given continuous experiences to cultivate reading and writing within a social context. When working on their research report, Tami and her partner gathered information and discussed the relevance of their choices for their paper. They verified their understanding of the information with each other and the teacher. As they typed their information on the computer, they continued to collaborate on their report by discussing how they would state a sentence or find the correct spelling of a word.

Provides for reading strategies

Guided practice of reading strategies helps students acquire these strategies when reading independently. After the teacher suggested the girls look in the index of several books to find specific information about

their topic, Tami and her partner looked in the index to find information about ashes. They also used subheadings to locate needed information.

In relating prior knowledge to text and using information in text to support ideas, during a group discussion Tami responded.

...where is it coming from?

Under the ground.

Yeah, it's coming from way down under the earth.

And those gases are released.

And that causes pressure. You know how you've an

an air hose. You put...

Put what?

You put air in your tires.

Or something like if you put you finger over the hose. It just...

It's pressure.

Support program

The Chapter 1 teacher with the regular classroom teacher weekly planned for instruction around a theme. When asked about her Chapter 1 program, Tami responded,

I think it was different because we do, sometimes we do plays.

We had an oral report and we haven't had an oral report before.

Do you think Chapter was more connected with what you were doing in your regular classroom?

Yes, because the oral report was about what we were doing in our classroom.

It was about Japan and volcanoes.

Discussion

The study of fostering and constraining factors affecting Tami's literacy development attempts to portray an overview of how her literacy is acquired. The nonschool factors, prior school factors, and present school factors cumulatively affect her literacy development. First, the data indicate that nonschool factors greatly constrain Tami's literacy in important ways. Limited experiences of being read-to, environmentally limiting literacy experiences, failure of home and school to collaborate, negatively acquired feelings and attitudes, and a limited range of interests constrain her literacy development of fiction print (Cazden, 1982; Dyson, 1990). Being read-to gives a child background knowledge, understanding of text structure, and a model of good oral expression. Failure to provide this experience puts a child at a disadvantage because the teacher first has to provide these experiences before a child is ready to continue the production of literacy attainment (Anang, 1982; Smith cited in Giddings, 1992).

Second, nonfiction print experiences further limit Tami. Even fewer experiences of being read-to in this genre coupled with stronger negative attitudes and feelings about interacting with nonfiction print constrain her. Because nonfiction print is organized differently from fiction print, a child also needs exposure to this genre through reading and writing activities to acquire the background knowledge and understanding of text structure to successfully interact with nonfiction print (Raphael, Englert, & Kirschner, 1989). Often, nonfiction print is neglected in these early years by both parents and teachers (Pappas,1991).

Third, limited nonschool experiences with reference print further constrain Tami's literacy. Lack of exposure to and use of these materials

make her uncomfortable and ill-equipped to independently use these materials. Daily experiences which foster a child's literacy include observations of parents reading a newspaper, using a public library as a resource for information, and using a dictionary, encyclopedias, or other reference materials (Anang, 1982; Smith cited in Giddings, 1992).

The limited nonschool experiences with fiction, nonfiction, and reference print place the burden on the school to be informed about these constraints and to foster the literacy development for students. Failure to address these constraints results in a mismatch between the child's home and school cultures, which is Tami's dilemma (Pearson, 1990).

Prior school fiction experiences also constrain Tami's literacy. Not being read-to daily and traditional instructional strategies (Giddings, 1990; Gersten & Dimino, 1989) limit the needed role modeling and integrated purposeful reading and writing experiences which enhance literacy development (Englert & Palincsar, 1991; Raphael & Englert, 1990). Further, lack of quality literacy materials constrains this development. Instead, controlled reading text structure, limited vocabulary, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets comprise the majority of her elementary literacy experiences (Giddings, 1990; Gersten & Dimino, 1989).

The data further suggest that nonfiction and reference print experiences are even more limited. Very few opportunities were provided that developed background knowledge and interaction with text structure of nonfiction print. Almost no exposure to the use of reference print was provided in her prior school experiences.

Tami's prior school experiences with Chapter 1 programs further constrain her literacy development. No coordination of programs existed between the regular classroom and Chapter 1 classroom teachers, which

placed the burden on Tami to understand and adjust to the two programs. Additionally, more of the same ineffective strategies were used for intervention that were being used in the regular classroom. Extensive use of ditto sheets, isolation of skills instruction, and memorization of spelling words permeated her Chapter 1 experience (Rowan & Guthrie, 1988; Ascher, 1987).

Present school constraints include Tami's perception of all school experiences that neither she nor her family were involved in the school experience. At one instance, she further states that little or no involvement occured with the students in the planning stages of building a model of a volcano.

Overall, Tami's learning style and personality constrain her literacy development. She is very quiet and holds back from participating in discussions. Rather, she observes others interactions in discussions. This limits her expression and clarification of ideas. She may have different rules for speaking which do not match the rules for the school culture (Cazden, 1982). She has difficulty in reading aloud and is very self-conscious about it. She feels that she learns best when she reads aloud, which, in fact, decreases her fluency and comprehension.

Nonschool factors that foster Tami's literacy development of fiction matierials include being read-to and reading-to experiences. Any experiences in this area foster literacy development. When she was younger, Tami was read-to sporadically and during her present school experience is required to read daily for homework. These experiences foster positive attitudes and feelings toward fiction print. They also further her interest in her love of animals.

The experiences Tami had with nonfiction print are supportive. For

example, because she had difficulty reading nonfiction print to complete an assignment, her sister provided the scaffolding for her by reading it to her and helping her with the assignment (Anang, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978). Reference print is present in the home; however, its use is limited, being an inherited "treasure" which is treated with a hands-off attitude from the adults.

Prior school experiences with fiction print are fostered by two teachers regularly reading to Tami's class. Further, use of writing workshop in fourth grade gives her opportunities to view herself as a writer of fiction materials (Raphael & Englert, 1990).

Even though limited, Tami's interaction with nonfiction and reference print foster her literacy. Reading about presidents and writing a report encourage her awareness of print other than fiction and broaden her interests other than animals. Using a How To Spell book and a dictionary added to her strategies for finding spelling and meaning of words.

Present School Experiences

Her present experiences foster literacy with fiction print in many meaningful ways. Because the teacher provides a supportive learning environment, Tami is nurtured in cultivating a more postive reading attitude. She receives instruction and practices a wide range of reading strategies with the guidance of a more knowledgeable adult, one of three teachers and an instructional aide. The learning environment centers around thematic studies in multi-age groups which broadens her knowledge base through integrated reading and writing activities (Walmsley & Walp, 1990; Cazden, 1982). Tami is provided many pre-reading and pre-writing activities to activiate prior knowledge (Cazden,

1982). Using reading and writing together enhances the social connection between reading and writing purposes (Raphael & Englert, 1990; McCarthey & Raphael, 1989). Writing then becomes a meaning-making act and reading becomes an interpretative act (Nystrand, 1990).

Also, the multi-age grouping allows students to serve as the more knowledgeable person as a peer tutor and furthers their communication skills. Comprehension skills are increased through use of instructional strategies. Discussions of students' prior knowledge are related to text and supportive oral reading develops fluency and vocabulary. Readers' theater and other forms of repeated readings further enhance comprehension.

Literacy of nonfiction print is developed through use of varied reading and writing purposes. Within a rich literacy environment Tami is given daily opportunities to silent and buddy read nonfiction print for pleasure. She is also guided by more knowledgeable adults, the teachers, to discuss print, to use it for background information of fiction print, and to use it to relate to her own prior experiences (Au & Kawakami, 1984). She is guided in using text structure to read for information, to use contents, index, and subheadings to gain information. Through varying her reading purpose, being in a literacy rich environment, and acquiring additional reading strategies, Tami also increases comprehension in reading nonfiction print (Pappas, 1993; Raphael & Englert, 1990).

Tami's use of reference print fosters her literacy in her present school experience. Her teachers provide purposeful experiences for her to use reference print such as using a thesaurus to expand her vocabulary or a book to check her spelling. She participates in writing for varied purposes: to respond to a guest speaker about the theme, to reflect about an activity, or to write for her own purpose during writing workshop

(Englert & Palinscar, 1991). Tami participates in reading and writing activities by researching topics and writing reports about them to present to the class. While researching topics, Tami is provided reading strategies through teacher modeling, guided practice, and peer collaboration (Raphael & Englert, 1990).

Her present school Chapter 1 program fosters Tami's literacy in varying manners, specifically by being an inclusive aspect of her literacy experience. The classroom teacher, the RIP teacher, the Chapter 1 teacher, and the Chapter 1 instructional aide plan and implement an integrated theme (Walmsley & Walp, 1990). Tami uses materials and participates in activities that add to her knowledge of the subject currently being studied (McCarthey & Raphael, 1989; Cazden, 1982).

Implications and Further Study

There is a need to identify and implement strategies that will enhance the development of literacy among all students, particularly among poor and minority students. In-depth studies of students in at-risk situations will guide us toward a more refined selection of strategies that creates a match between home and school cultures.

There is a need to inform parents and teachers that early experiences in all literacy genres strengthen children's background knowledge and understanding of text structure. Likewise, studies are needed in home and school cultures where diverse text is used in children's early years. Further, longitudinal studies are needed to indicate how building prior knowledge and text structure in early childhood grades affects students' interactions with diverse print genres in intermediate grades.

There is a need to study the effect of using nonfiction print in primary classrooms. Teachers' use of instructional strategies and their expectations of students to use these materials is warranted. Further, teachers' assumptions about students' knowledge of all print along with their actual knowledge is needed.

Curriculum developers need to use these studies as guidelines when considering material selection, instructional strategies, and theoretical frameworks around which to plan curriculum.

University teachers need to collaborate with classroom teachers and administrators to study students in at-risk situations. There is a need to inform our profession about instructional strategies, classroom environments, and supportive programs that will enhance literacy development within a social constructivist framework. Further, teacher education professors need to model instructional strategies in all genres. School administrators need to collaborate with their district administrators, university teachers, and their school faculties to create school cultures where all children learn.

Preservice and inservice teachers, then, need to implement these effective strategies, create dynamic classroom environments, and administer supportive programs in the classroom based on a social constructivist framework.

Summary

The factors that constrained and fostered Tami's literacy are evident. To view only parts of her literacy separately gives fragmented views of the story. Looking at the context within the whole is needed before instructional strategies can be designed and implemented in classrooms

that effectively create cultures for all children. It further supports a need to design and implement instructional strategies in all genres of text throughout the school curriculum. Finally, it supports a need to involve parents in all aspects of the school culutre, to blend the home and school cultures in ways that benefit all children.

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Table 1

Categories And Subcategories Of Nonschool, Prior School, And Present School Factors That Constrain Literacy

Nonschool	Prior school	Present school
Fiction print		
Read-to-experience	Read-to-experience	
Environmental limitations	Environmental limitations	
Home-school connections		
Interests		
Nonfiction print		
Read-to-experience	Classroom experience	
Attitudes and feelings		
Reference print		
Use of materials	Use of materials	Student planning
Limited materials		
Overall		
Learning style	Support program	
Personality		Personality

Table 2

Categories And Subcategories Of Nonschool, Prior School, And Present School Factors That Foster Literacy

Nonschool	Prior school	Present school
Fiction print		
Read-to-experience	Read-to-experience	Cultivates reading attitudes
Reading-to-experiences	Writing workshop	Provides for reading
strategies		
		Peer tutor
		Reading-writing behaviors
		Comprehension
Nonfiction print		
Read-to-experience	Classroom experiences	Reading/writing purposes
		Rich literacy environment
		Provides for readingstrategies
		Comprehension
Reference print		
Home exeriences	Classroom experiences	Purposeful experiences
		Varied writing purposes
		Reading/writing behavior
		Provides for readingstrategies
OVERALL		
		Support Program

Appendix A

Categories And Subcategories Of Nonschool Factors That Constrain Literacy

Nonschool -Family and home experiences, feelings, and attitudes acquired outside the school culture

Fiction print- Print that is classified as not true

- Read-to-experience - Adult or more able peer reading aloud
- Environmental limitations- Physical, emotional, mental or environmentafactors that constrain literacy
- Home-school connection- Joint effort of home and school to foster literacy
- Attitudes and feelings - Personal attitudes toward and feelings about fiction
- Interests -Experiences that foster any kind of reading interest

Nonfiction print- Print that is classified as true

- Read-to-experience -Adult or more able peer reading aloud
- Attitudes and feelings -Personal attitudes toward and feelings about nonfiction

Reference print-Print that is used as a reference tool

- Use of materials -Frequency and manner of use of reference print
- Limited materials -Availability of reference print

Overall- factors that constrain literacy of all generes

- Learning style -Predominant sensory mode for processing information
- Personality -Behavior in social situations

Appendix B

Categories And Subcategories Of Nonschool Factors That Foster Literacy

Nonschool - Family and home experiences, feelings, and attitudes acquired outside of school culture

Fiction print - Print tht is classified as not true

Read-to-experience	- Adult or moe able peer reading aloud
Reading-to-experience	-Student reading to less able or nonreader
Attitudes and feelings	- Personal attitudes toward and feelings about fiction
Interests	-Experiences that foster any kind of reading interest

Nonfiction print - Print that is classifed as true

Read-to-experience	-Adult or more able child reading aloud

Reference print - Print that is used a reference tool

Home experiences	- Print available

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Appendix C

Categories And Subcategories Of Prior School Factors That Constrain Literacy

Prior school -K-4 school experiences, feelings, and attitudes acquired in prior school culture

Fiction print- Print that is classified as not true

Read-to-experience	-Adult or more able peer reading aloud
Environmental limitations	-Physical, emotional,mental,or environmental factors that constrain literacy

Nonfiction print - Print that is classified as true

Classroom experience	-School experiences that constrain literacy

Reference print -Print that is used as a reference tool

Use of materials	- Frequency and manner of using reference print

Overall - Factors that constrain literacy of all generes

Support programs	-Program that privides additional literacy service

Appendix D

Categories And Subcategories Of Prior School Factors That Foster Literacy

Prior school -K-4 school experiences, feelings, and attitudes acquired in prior school culture

Fiction print - Print that is classified as not ture

Read-to-experience	-Adult or more able child reading aloud
Writing workshop	-Classroom activity using writing process and involving partner

Nonfiction print - Print that is classified as true

Classroom experiences	-Experiences that foster literacy

Reference print - Print that is used as a reference tool

Classroom experiences	-Experiences that foster literacy

Appendix E

Categories And Subcategories Of Present School FactorsThat Constrain Literacy

Present school - Grade 5 school experiences, feelings, and attitudes in present school culture

Fiction print - Print that is classified as not true

Nonfiction print - Print that is classifed as true

Reference print - Print that is used as a reference tool

Student planning - Involving student in initial planning

Overall - Factors that constrain literacy of all genres

Learning style -Predominant sensory mode for processing information

Personality -Behavior in social settings

Appendix F

Categories And Subcategories Of Present School Factors That Foster Literacy

Present school - Grade 5 school experiences, feelings, and attitudes in present school culture

Fiction print -Print that is classified as not true

Cultivates reading attitudes	-Classroom environment cultivates attitudes that foster literacy
Provides for reading strategies	-Classroom environment provides opportunity to learn and use reading strategies
Peer tutor	-Working with a peer who gives feedback or assistance
Reading/writing behavior	-Behavior that foster learning while using fiction print
Comprehension	-Activities that foster comprehension of fiction print

Nonfiction print-Print that is classified as true

Reading/writing purposes	-Activities that vary purpose for reading/writing
Rich literacy envirpnment	-Wide range of literacy items in classroom
Provides for reading strategies	-Classroom environment provides opportunity to learn and use reading strategies
Comprehension	-Activities that foster comprehension of nonfiction print

(appendix continues)

Appendix F

Categories and Subcategories of Present School Factors That Foster Literacy

Reference print - Print that is used as a reference tool

Purposeful experiences	-Experiences that require purpose to use reference print
Varied writing pruposes	-Use of reference print for various purposes to complete writing assignments
Reading/writing behaviors	-Behavior that fosters learning when using reference print
Provides for reading strategies	-Classroom environment provides opportunity to learn and use reading strategies

Overall - Factors that foster literacy of all generes.

Support program	-Programs that provide additional literacy services